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## Blood moon over Ballarat



The recent total lunar eclipse was admirably captured here by Carol Hall.

Carol got up very early on July 28, 2018 and took a series of photographs showing the sequence of the eclipse as Earth got between the Sun and the Moon.

Such eclipses are relatively rare events, occurring only every few years.

The next total lunar eclipse that will be seen in Victoria is due in May 2021.

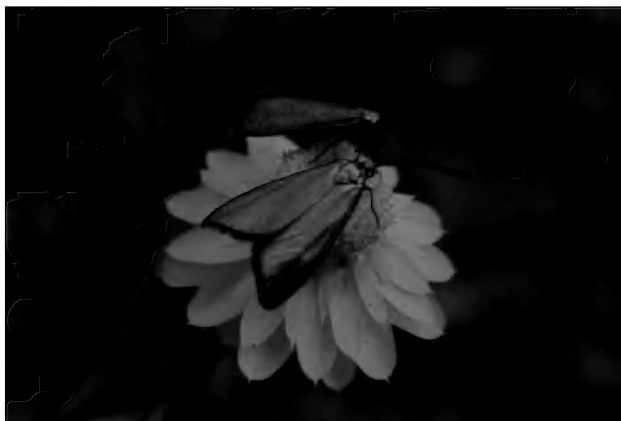
*Lake Wendouree in darkness—except for a mixture of earthly and heavenly lighting.*



## MY NATURE YEAR

The topic for the July meeting was My Nature Year, presented by Roger Thomas. This took the form of a Ballarat naturalist's journey through each month of the year, highlighting special flowers, birds and other typical or favourite aspects of nature occurring at that time.

From the depths of winter in July, through spring, summer and autumn, to June, Roger spoke of many things we can find in our local natural places. July started with the first singing Blackbirds, stunningly-coloured Superb Fairywrens in their new plumage, through sundew and orchid leaves, swans nesting, the very first flowers of Golden Wattle at a special spot, and so on.



NOVEMBER  
Turquoise Forester Moth  
(*Pollanisia* sp.)

August brings us more wattles, and early wildflowers such as *Hovea*, *Hardenbergia*, Early Nancies, Yellow Stars and other welcome signs of increasing temperatures and increasing sunshine. The very first migrant birds arrive in August. Everything seemed to be a “favourite” for this naturalist, no matter what the month.

The spring months are of course extra busy, with “new” flowers and birds making their appearance weekly until the end of spring when the ground starts to dry and many wildflowers fade away. Roger mentioned that the largest number of local wildflower species can be found between mid-October and mid-November.



OCTOBER  
Purple Beard-heath  
(*Calochilus roberstonii*)

A photo of our special local Enfield Grevillea, *Grevillea bedggoodiana*, brought recollections of Roger's early FNCB days under the guidance of Mrs Stella Bedggood, who kept our Club going in the 1960s and 1970s.



MARCH  
 “Manna” from Manna  
 gum *Eucalyptus viminalis*

Caterpillars, tiny ephemeral plants, numerous orchids, Fairies Aprons, native grasses, more fragrant wattles, more migratory birds, and turquoise moths were all included in the spring selection, with Roger’s favourite wildflower, the Blue Pincushion, indicating the end of the wildflower season for another year.

During the talk we learned when and where to find these natural wonders.

We learned that four orchid species can be found on New Year’s Day, and that the “off-season” summer flowers of sweet Bursaria attract their own special range of summer insects. Autumn is also the time to hunt for Parson’s-bands orchids and the first Cranberry Heath flowers. As the autumn rains arrive, so we find correas, common heath, cattle egrets, ghost fungi, flame robins and more.

Intriguing aspects of autumn were the manna to be found under Manna Gums, the attraction of various raptors to stubble burns, and the appearance of the Bird-dropping Spider. Roger’s illustrated talk certainly demonstrated that there is always something to be found in our local natural places, no matter what month of the year.



JUNE  
 Inky Caps  
*(Coprinopsis atramentaria)*

Also, even though we may have seen them before in other years, the thrill and pleasure are always there.

## Extracts from Club Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2018

### Opening and Apologies

Attendance: 25 members, including new members Graeme Lunt and Vireya Jacquard, and 1 visitor were welcomed by Club President John Gregurke.

Apologies: Les Hanrahan, Andy Arnold, Peter & Claire Dalman, Heather Merrylees, Kathy Elder, Mark Moravec, John Mil-dren, Sue & Angus McLachlan, Helen Young-Harvey, Wayne McGuire and Wayne Walker.

*Moved: P. Norquay      Seconded: B. Murphy      Carried.*

**Minutes of Previous Meeting on July 6, 2018:** Accepted as a true & accurate record.

*Moved: P. Billing    Seconded: C. Hall      Carried.*

### Business Arising from Correspondence:

Does anyone have a contact that might know specific details of the location of Soil Burrowing Cockroaches in Stawell - for Harley Rose, a Sydney University researcher? John G. has contacted Joan Pitaro who has forwarded the request on to Neil Marriott.

### Reports:

#### Treasurer's Report:

Opening bal: \$8,302.12

Income \$184.52

Expenses \$208.40

Closing bal: \$8,278.24

*Moved: E. Noble    Seconded: S. Faull      Carried.*

### General Business

Draft Life Membership guidelines for FNCB were distributed electronically to members prior to the meeting for their review and consideration.

**Motion:** Fran Hanrahan moved that they be accepted as an official document, John Petheram seconded the motion and all members present were in favour.      *Carried.*

A draft FNCB policy on ethical use of technology on field trips was also distributed electronically to members prior to the meeting for their review and consideration. The document was approved pending the addition of a sentence about complying with CASA regulations under the "Drones" section. Emily to add and circulate the final version.

**Motion:** Elspeth Swan moved that it be accepted as per above condition, and Peter Noble seconded the motion. All in favour. *Carried.*

Minutes of August meeting continued...

Spiny Rice-flower surveys to continue at Skipton Common in August, starting Thurs. 9th. All welcome. Meet at the pedestrian gate of Skipton Common in Bridge St, Skipton at 9.30am. Contact John Gregurke if you would like to carpool.

Shirley promoted the National Science Week events on “Parasites” taking place at the Ballarat Art Gallery from Saturday Sept. 11 to Sunday Sept. 19 and offered two free tickets to the event on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. from 5-6.30pm. Contact Shirley if interested.

Judith Bailey from The Ballarat Observatory raised her concerns about plans to install lighting around Lake Wendouree and sought support from members to attend a photo-shoot for The Courier to accompany an article about the impacts of lighting on the natural world (especially insects, bats and birds), general amenity and the night sky. She will send Emily further details as they are confirmed.

John Petheram gave an overview of the planting of approximately 200 trees and shrubs to be undertaken on Sunday August 12 at Woovookarung Regional Park adjacent to previous plantings. Access is via Hocking Avenue (car parking will be at the very end).

John also promoted the next BREAZE lunch time workshop, this time on the implications of the increase in the solar feed-in tariff to 29c. The free workshop will be held at the Ballarat Library on August 15, from 12.30-1.15pm. All welcome.

John Gregurke has been contacted by Marion Blythman at the Mechanics Institute who has a number of old “nature magazines” to give away. Contact Marion for more details if you are interested.

**Presentation** “My Nature Year” by Roger Thomas

— see separate report.

## Music and field nats (?)

Music is the universal language, and what better way to while away the cold winter nights by imagining the favourite music of some of our field naturalist friends. Their interests and specialities probably mean they like particular songs and musicians.

Obviously, anything by the Beatles, The Byrds or Kate Bush.  
Eagle Rock (Daddy Cool); Home among the Gumtrees; Nothing but Flowers (Talking Heads); Bushfire (B52s); Butterfly (The Gadflies)  
For the geologists among us,  
Solid Rock (Goanna); Rock is my Life (Bachman Turner Overdrive); Stone Woman (Bryan Ferry)

Music covers all the various field naturalist interest:  
Bullfrog (Emerson, Lake and Palmer); Blowin' in the wind (Bob Dylan) (it contains the chorus "the ants are my friends..."); The Butterfly Ball (Roger Glover); Tie a yellow ribbon (Tony Orlando and Dawn); Ant music (Adam and the Ants); High Flying Bird (Elton John); Astronomy (Blue Oyster Cult)



Mycologists will enjoy anything on the Mushroom label.  
Raptor watchers love anything by the Eagles.  
Parrot enthusiasts will listen to anything by Budgie (yes, there is such a group).  
Corvid specialists always like Sheryl Crow.  
Botanists love The Flower Kings.

How about something by Jo Jo Zep & the Falcons, Caldera, The Rolling Stones, Porcupine Tree, Spiderbait, Little Horner, Magma, Ozric Tentacles, Wings, Camel, Dragon, Gorillaz, Hunters & Collectors, Hall & Oates, Chocolate Starfish, Three Dog Night, Fuzzy Duck, Skunk Anansie, Atomic Rooster, Little River Band, it flew away, The Gadflies, Gryphon, Blodwyn Pig, The Hippos, Steppenwolf, Things of Stone and Wood, The Animals, Sting, T. Rex, Tame Impala, Cloud Control, Neil Diamond, Greg Lake, or Cat Stevens. Look them up – they are all actual bands or artists!

*Bill Elder*

### Show & Tell/ Field Reports

Margaret R. went to the FNCV fungi foray at Blackwood led by Les Hanrahan and purchased the new guide to “Fungi of the Bendigo Region” which she brought along for members to look at. Les bought several spare copies so contact him if you would like to buy a copy (\$20).

Carol got up at 5am on the night of the eclipse and spent the lovely, quiet pre-dawn hours photographing the spectacular moon.

Judith told us that on the night of the eclipse, there were 8 campers and 40 other keen observers that came to the Ballarat Observatory to watch the astrological event.

Peter B. enjoyed seeing Long-billed Corellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos near the old tip site at Nerrina.

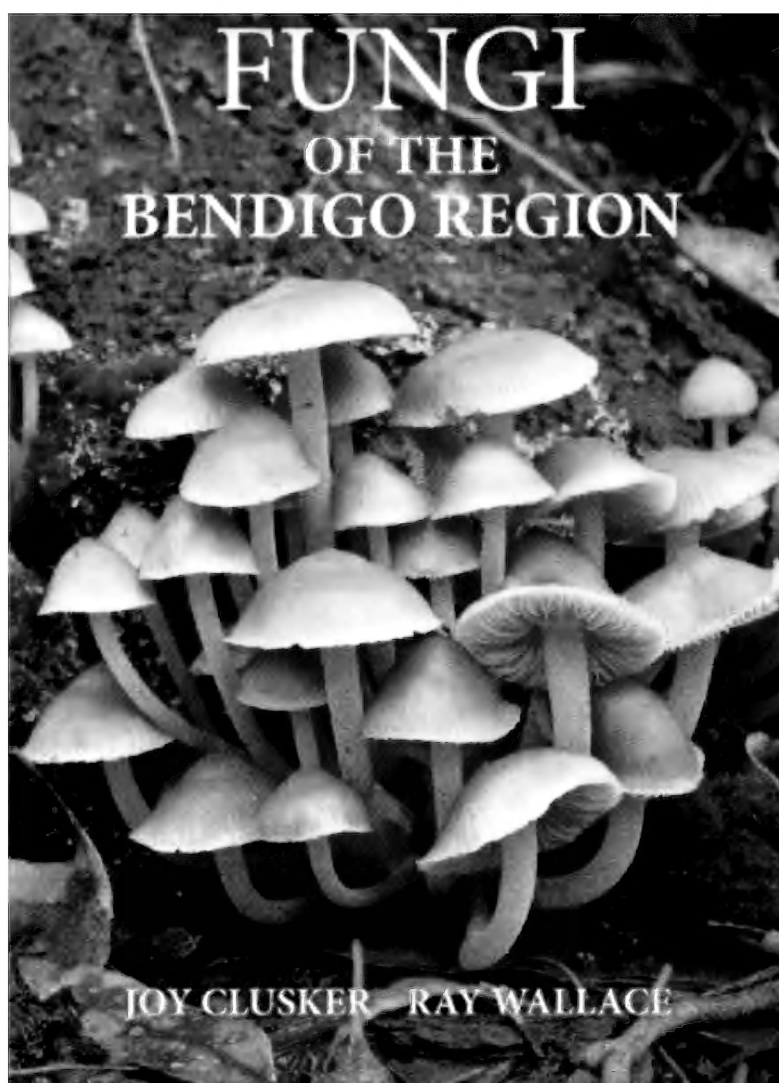
Emily remarked on the eerily dry and warm weather in Melbourne in the last week of July (two days of 19°C), to which Tim added the statistics that whilst Ballarat had 68mm of rainfall in July, Melbourne had just 19mm.

Emily also saw her first ever Fringed Helmet-orchid, *Corybas fimbriatus*, growing on a roadside in Belgrave South under a Poa tussock, along with Stately/ Veined Helmet-orchids, *C. diemenicus* and Nodding Greenhoods, *Pterostylis nutans*.

Elsbeth reported that a pair of White-browed Scrubwrens are building a nest in her garden shed at Mt Egerton.







A new fungi field guide has been published called 'Fungi of The Bendigo Region'. The authors of the book are fungi enthusiasts Joy Clusker and Ray Wallace from Bendigo.

It contains beautiful clear photos taken by Joy Clusker of over 200 native and exotic species from different habitats around Bendigo ranging from the slightly higher rainfall area around Mount Alexander near Harcourt, to the drier open mallee and grey box woodland at Kamarooka, north of Bendigo.

Nearly all the species pictured can also be found somewhere in the Ballarat area.

Ray Wallace helped with the identification and descriptions of the species pictured as well as the introduction to the guide.

This handy-sized book would be useful for any naturalist keen to put a name to the fungi species that he sees. At \$20.00 a copy plus postage it is also good value for the money spent.

Les Hanrahan



## AUGUST EXCURSION REPORT

Our half day field excursion for August was to the City of Ballarat Plant Nursery and then onto the adjacent North Gardens Wetlands. Our leader was Roger Thomas who manages the nursery and we were given an interesting insight in the how the nursery operates. The nursery does not sell to the public but supplies plants to various projects that happen within the footprint of the municipality.

A grant comes from the City of Ballarat to operate the nursery and under guidance from Roger a lot of the work is carried out by a handful of volunteers who meet on Wednesdays.



*City of Ballarat Tree Nursery*

A diverse range of indigenous plants is grown from seed and some by cuttings. Even after all the years of growing native plants some are still difficult to propagate. Some plants are grown in styrene boxes so seed may be more easily collected, others do they may be divided to make new plants as required. Most of the eucalypts are sown in late spring so they are ready to be planted out in the following autumn/winter. The current stock is diminished as a lot of plants have already been distributed for activities such as National Tree Day. A brief interlude in the polyhouse, where it was 15<sup>0</sup>C, was much appreciated. We saw the collection of four species of native mint, newly taken cuttings of hop goodenia and several trays of germinating seeds. Morning tea was held in the potting shed where we were shown a range of the seed for use in various projects.

Next it was out the side gate, past the heritage listed remnants of the old zoological gardens and into the North Garden Wetlands. The wetlands are designed to take the storm water from areas in Wendouree and filter it before it makes its way into Lake Wendouree. The wetlands were constructed in the early 2000s on what was a mown grass area.



*Checking on the seedlings*

*Checking a yam daisy for tubers*



A series of paths wind around the various ponds and there are always interesting birds to see. While mainly planted with indigenous vegetation there are a few non indigenous plants which probably came in with the mulch many years ago that should now be removed. While the wetlands provide a magnificent educational resource as well as a relaxing place to enjoy nature they are looking a bit neglected and would be enhanced with some more understorey plants and removal of selected species.

## *Bird List for North Gardens Wetland*

Acanthiza pusilla	Brown Thornbill
Anas gracilis	Gery Teal
Anas superciliosa	Pacific Black Duck
Anthochaera carunculata	Red Wattlebird
Aythya australis	Hardhead
Cacatua tenuirostris	Long-billed Corella
Corvus mellori	Little Raven
Cracticus tibicen	Australian Magpie
Cracticus torquatus	Grey Butcherbird
Cygnus atratus	Black Swan
Egretta novaehollandiae	White-faced Heron
Eolophus roseicapillus	Galah
Gallinula tenebrosa	Dusky Moorhen
Grallina cyanoleuca	Magpie-lark
Ocyphaps lophotes	Crested Pigeon*
Porphyrio porphyrio	Purple Swamphen
Rhipidura albiscapa	Grey Fantail
Strepera graculina	Pied Currawong
Threskiornis molucca	Australian White Ibis
Trichoglossus haematodus	Rainbow Lorikeet
Vanellus miles	Masked Lapwing

## *Sample Nursery Plant List*

Bursaria spinulosa	Sweet Bursaria
Callistemon sieberi	River Bottlebrush
Carex appressa	Tall Sedge
Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle
Cordyline australis	New Zealand Cabbage-tree
Eucalyptus camaldulensis	River Red Gum
Eucalyptus ovata	Swamp Gum
Goodenia lanata	Hop Goodenia
Hakea decurrens	Bushy Needlewood
Hesperocyparis macrocarpa	Monterey Cypress
Hypochaeris radicata	Flatweed
Lomandra longifolia,	Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Plantago coronopus	Buck's-horn Plantain

A list of some of the plant species and additional photos will be found on the club's blog,

<https://fieldnatballarat.wordpress.com/2018/08/19/august-excursion/>  
and Facebook page.

# CALENDAR 2018

## September

Fri 7 “Outfoxing *Vulpes vulpes* for biodiversity conservation”

Dr. Bronwyn Hradsky, Research Fellow, Melbourne Uni

Sat 8 Narmbool Mathew Dowler, Education Officer, Narmbool

Tues 24 Committee meeting, venue TBA

Sept 29 to Oct 8 ANN Get Together, Halls Gap and Anglesea,  
Hosted by SEANA

## October

Fri 5 Native bees & other insects in a pollinator’s garden

Linda Rogan, Editor, *Victorian Entomologist*

Sun 7 Excursion to Illabarook NCR and Rail Reserve

Emily Noble, FNCB

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## Committee

President	John Gregurke
Vice Pres	Fran Hanrahan
Secretary	Emily Noble
Treasurer	Les Hanrahan
	Andy Arnold
	Bill Elder
	Val Hocking
	John Petheram
	Elsbeth Swan

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Bill Elder

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**Club email:** [ballaratfnc@gmail.com](mailto:ballaratfnc@gmail.com)

**Meetings** are held at Federation University Gillies St Campus on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

**Excursions:** Leave from the carpark of Federation University Gillies St Campus at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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